

## CORRESPONDENCE.

786 LAFAYETTE AVE.,  
BROOKLYN, N. Y., APRIL 9, 1889.

For some inexplicable reason the sympathy of the ladies is generally with Halsted. At a private club meeting on Saturday, where fifty intelligent and cultured women met to discuss affairs of home, state, and country, the rejection of their favorite by the Senate was vigorously condemned. Senator Ingalls seemed to be the individual particularly selected for sarcastic criticism. At the close of the discussion a bright little girl, whose mother had been particularly eloquent in her denunciations, came running up to me and said, "I know why my mamma don't like Senator Ingalls."

"Indeed," I replied, "why is it?"

"Oh, because he looks so awful homely in Puck."

This naive explanation set me to thinking about the influence of caricature on the general public, and I should like to see this subject philosophically treated. We are not all born logical, and it is said that only about two in ten can immediately see the point of a joke. If this is true it follows very naturally that the effect of caricature must be in the direction of unreasonable prejudice.

"I don't know anything about your Mr. Blaine," said a titled Englishman who lately visited us, "but I have seen his pictures in the comic papers, and that is enough."

With many instances fresh in mind, it seems to me that as a political weapon caricature is the strongest one known to man. But this may be a superficial view of the subject.

The New York "Herald" of last Sunday took a new departure. It entered respectfully, and in a sense scientifically, the realm of spiritualism. The able and mainly article of Dr. Heber Newton in its columns will cause considerable agitation. Dr. Newton's adoption of the Socratic method in dealing with the subject was most wise. The "Herald" editorial was equally broad and frank, and though I have no gift of prophecy, I feel sure that if this journal will follow up the work so happily undertaken, it will make itself the foremost paper in the land. We are all of us sick of prejudice and bigotry, and equally sick of trickery. Facts are what the world wants now. There is no question of a continued existence. Our friends are here to-day and then we know them no more. Can we logically comfort our aching hearts with the thought of a resurrection? That is the question before the world. Dr. Heber Newton has opened the door wide, not only for discussion but for frank statement.

Speaking of prophecy reminds me of an exceedingly interesting item which Mrs. Thomas Carlyle made in her journal as far back as 1845. "I have just been introduced to young Mr. Pigott," she wrote. "I believe he will come to be a second Robespierre. He will be instrumental in having the heads removed from many shoulders, and will finally be instrumental in having his own head removed from his own shoulders." Surely as a reader of character, Mrs. Carlyle had no peer. On one occasion, when her husband desired to have a particularly favorable impression of a gentleman whose acquaintance he had made under somewhat peculiar circumstances, a friend said to him in the presence of his wife, "Why don't you ask Mrs. Carlyle?" "Oh," she expressed her opinion, "was the surly reply, 'but I take no stock in women's whims.' The man turned out a rascal."

The reports that have lately been published in regard to the dying condition of Miss Mollie Fancher of Brooklyn, are entirely without foundation. She is still in the same little nest, in the same bed, utterly helpless except for one hand and arm, and totally blind as far as physical sight is concerned. But she is more alive than most women of my acquaintance after all. These awful limitations only seem to add to the vitality of her thought and the power of her intellect. The amount of work performed by this invalid is phenomenal. As the Vice-President of the Sargent Manufacturing Company Miss Fancher is a brilliant success. She is not only inventing new comforts for the ill and the deformed, but she is selling stock, and performing every task in the most thorough and business like manner. Any person who has the slightest interest in Miss Fancher's work will have all their questions answered by addressing her, Cor. Gates avenue and Downing street, Brooklyn, N. Y. This woman's chirography is a wonder in itself.

So many inquiries are made in reference to the reading of MSS. that I take this opportunity of saying that work of this kind cannot be undertaken on commissions to be received from the sale of manuscripts. The very modest price for reading and criticism must be paid in advance, with stamps for return of the article. All MSS. that prove of sufficient merit for publication will be placed if possible. It is impossible to find a home for an article without reading it, and manifestly quite as impossible to read without compensation.

Capt. Mary F. Miller has just taken the oath before the Inspector of Steam boats to perform faithfully her duties as steamboat captain. Mrs. Miller is 40 years old, well educated, and a rigid disciplinarian. Who says that the world doesn't move!

Sensible women have not yet commenced to clean house. They wait till pneumonia, and bronchitis, and rheumatism have retired from the scene. Closets, and pantries and store rooms can be safely put to rights at this time, but carpet lifting and paint scrubbing should wait for genial weather.

ELEANOR KINN.

**Letter from Plainfield.**  
PLAINFIELD, N. J., April 3, 1889.  
To the Citizen:

I have been thinking of writing to you for some time but being so nearly blind I find it difficult to gratify my pleasure in so doing. If I succeed in making my manuscript legible I hope to give your readers some items of interest occasionally.

Plainfield, as your readers doubtless know, is a city of many attractive features, containing within the city limits proper about 10,000 inhabitants, besides about 5,000 in the borough of North Plainfield, just across the brook in the adjoining county of Somerset, city and borough being for all practical, social and business purposes one city, having but one Post Office and one railway station and most of the churches, stores and shops being in the city limits proper. Both city and borough are decidedly Republican in politics. Plainfield has an enviable reputation for its well sustained churches and schools and its literary and moral culture. Besides a well organized and graded high school it has many excellent private schools for both sexes, the most prominent of which is that kept by Mr. John Seal, a graduate of Yale College, who has had a large and successful experience. He usually has 65 or 70 pupils under his care—all boys—many of whom he fits for college, sending them to Yale, Princeton and Columbia. He has several efficient teachers under him. The public high school is under the management of Miss Bulkley, a lady of rare ability, as principal, exhibiting her fine qualities as manager in her assiduous attention to the large number of teachers under her supervision, personally directing them in all the details of their work, seeing that no bar is let down, no stone left unturned for the welfare of the pupils. She spent a portion of her summer vacation in Europe, gathering such information as could be obtained that might aid her in her office. Here are the headquarters of the famous Chautauqua Institute, or people's college, with its more than 100,000 pupils scattered over the whole country, reading systematically a prescribed course of historical, scientific and literary instruction, having circles in nearly all the States. This is largely a residential city, a thousand or more of its business men doing business in New York, going to Gotham six mornings and returning six evenings in the week, making a lively passenger traffic for the Central Railroad of New Jersey. Although the city is some twenty-four miles from New York the distance is made by express trains in about forty-five minutes.

There are about fifteen Christian churches here of all denominations and grades and all are well attended and supported. A good feature about them is that the clergy are all on the best of terms with each other, having a "ministers' association" that meets at regular intervals to discuss and consider questions of common interest. Their good influence, with that of their churches, may be seen in the strong and high moral tone of the community. This was exemplified on last Monday evening when the city council voted by a large majority not to grant any license to sell intoxicating beverages to any hotel or saloon within the city limits. This of course does not include the borough of North Plainfield which is beyond the jurisdiction of the council.

There are two daily newspapers here and two weeklies. The *Daily Evening News*, (Republican,) and the *Daily Press*, (Democrat,) both well patronized. The *Central New Jersey Times*, (weekly) is the oldest periodical in the city. It is Republican in its tone and tendency, but conservative and free from political cant and demoralizing sensationalism that mar so large a portion of the periodical press. It is largely patronized by the best families of the city. The *Daily Press* has a weekly edition named the *Constitutionalist*. The *Press* claims a circulation of some 1,200, while the *Daily Evening News* confesses to a circulation of some 1,600. Both enjoy a liberal advertising patronage.

I ought not to omit mentioning that there are a few important manufacturing enterprises here. The Potter and the Scott Press Works, manufacturing power printing presses of great value and in good demand among printers. The Pond Tool Works, recently removed here from Worcester, Mass., is an important industry

that promises to be of great benefit to the growth and prosperity of the city of Plainfield.

The Newark Annual Convention of the Methodist Episcopal Church meets here to-day. Bishop McNeil, of Chicago presiding. Nearly 250 ministers are in attendance. A prominent lay member of the church in his address address of welcome, pleasantly alluded to the warm cordiality with which families of the various denominations opened their doors to entertain the delegates. The Methodist would give them fire, the Baptist water to supply steam, the Presbyterian and Dutch Reform would put on the brakes and the Episcopal would give the orders. You will probably get the report of the proceedings through your newspaper exchanges.

T. H.

**Fashionable Cynicism.**  
YOUNG MEN AND MAIDENS WHO ARE TIERED OF THE WORLD. ELLA WHEELER WILCOX SHOWS THE SUPERIORITY OF OPTIMISM.

[From the New York Herald of April 7th.]

There is no more painful object in life to me than the spectacle of a pessimistic youth or maid, devoid of the hopeful dreams, the bright outlook, the trusting confidence which naturally belong to youth. They develop into disagreeable friends and uncomfortable wives and husbands and unsuccessful men and women.

Not many months ago I was questioned regarding my ideas of Santa Claus. Did I not think the illusion a cruel one and the awakening painful? Should not this mythical being be abolished? I said no; I recall the happiness the belief in Santa Claus gave me. I do not recall any succeeding misery. Let us keep our illusions while we may, and not awaken until we must. Too many parents now days seem desirous of tearing away the veil of illusions—or what they fear may become illusions—from their children's eyes.

To the young girl they say, "Do not expect happiness in love of marriage; there is little poetry and much handiwork in practicality about you." So, at the first shadow on the sunlight of her dreams, the girl is prepared to believe that the end of happiness has arrived, and she makes no effort to rescue her ideal from complete destruction.

Were I the mother of a young daughter I would say, "The world is mainly as you make it—people are, as a rule, what you believe them to be—and you receive from the world what you give to it. The greatest possible earthly happiness lies in a congenial marriage. Clouds may shadow your pathway at times, but the sunlight of love can dissipate them if it shines persistently and warms the ground." It seems to me much after that breeding to go about the world scattering the seeds of distrust and scepticism. We get quite enough of these ideas in the novels of the days, without being obliged to hear these false breeding theories expressed in every parlor and drawing room. I say "false" breeding advisedly.

I have a theory—the result of observation—which is quite my own. Al most without exception I have seen chronically inclined pessimistic people degenerate, or only achieve partial success in life, while the optimist even less richly endowed and achieves a more complete success, with the same amount of diligence only.

I believe the tendency of the world is strongly optimistic. Even the inanimate things of nature are helpful and kind toward one another. The breeze and the bee aid the flowers to propagate and bloom. The sun assists more yearning germs to grow up into beauty than all the tempests of blight. There is a subtle law of love and progress behind it all which fills the universe like a vast golden tide.

Let any man, however great and gifted, say to himself, "The world is my natural enemy; I have no faith in friendship or love or human kindness, but I am ambitious and I will succeed." Let that man toil as he may his progress toward success will be retarded, because he strains against the natural current of the universe. He who smiles and says, "The world is what we make it, friendship exists for those who deserve it and love begets love," that man floats with the current and all things assist him to goal, however distant it may be.

He who refuses to believe in anything or anybody, and fancies that a cruel or selfish motive underlies each friendly overture, must bar his own pathway toward progress. Should the flowers close their petals against the overtures of the priestlike bee, distrustful of his sting, or against the wind, distrustful of his noise, the floral family would degenerate and become extinct.

Should all the hidden germs of trees and plants refuse to answer to the sun's call, fearing that his purpose was to destroy them by his searching rays, how devoid of verdure the earth would become! When men refuse to believe in one another how barren becomes existence!

Give me the exuberant over confidence and egotism of youth rather than the over-careful and distrustful young cynic. The first will make friends and mistakes; he will confide himself to easily, suffer in consequence, learn wisdom from the experience and strength from the sorrow. He will taste the joys of true friendship, the pangs of misplaced faith, the rapture of love and perhaps the agony of loss. He will scale the heights and descend to the depths of feeling, and know what life means.

He will find hands held out to assist him, lips ready to praise him, eyes ready to smile upon him, for the joyous, confident and faithful nature attracts to itself its own attributes.

The young cynic, on the contrary, will make no friends and no progress. He will not fall, because he will not climb. He will not suffer from misplaced affections, because he will not love. He will spread gloom and de-

pression wherever he goes, and keeping on the level plane with careful feet he will exist, but never live.

I wish we could introduce a professor or preceptor of optimism into every school in the world. I would rather see a child taught the science of loving humanity than all the dead languages or higher mathematics.

Why not introduce this branch of instruction into our nurseries and homes? It is sorely needed.

**Care of the Eyes.**

Shades on lamp or gas burners should be of "milk" or ground glass; never of colored glass.

Never sleep opposite a window which will throw a flood of strong light on your eyes when you wake in the morning.

When bathing the face do not open the eyes under water, as this is apt to be injurious to the epithelial covering of the eye.

In all institutions, particularly for children, where the eyes are required to do close work, the proportion of the square surface of the windows to the square surface of the floor should never fall below one to four.

The short sighted eye is essentially a diseased eye, and should be treated as such. It affects by preference those who use their eyes constantly for fine or neat work, and is always unknown among the uncivilized nations.

When children work by light which falls in their faces they are apt to bend the body forward so as to shade the eyes by the head, or else twist it around so that the light shall fall on the page. Both of these positions are pernicious. There is great danger of the chest becoming narrow and contracted and of the spine becoming curved.

To bathe the eyes properly, take a large basin of cold water, bend the head over it, and with both hands throw the water with some force on the gently closed lids. This has something of the same effect as a shower bath, and has a toning up in thence which water applied in any other way has not.

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LIABILITIES, New York and Mass. Standard, 40,151,937.33  
SURPLUS, by former New York Standard, (Am. Ex. 4) per cent. Reserve, 5,734,253.21

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